

CITY OF
HOBART
ART 2013
PRIZE



A WORD FROM THE JUDGES

Max Delany
Brian Parkes
Jane Stewart

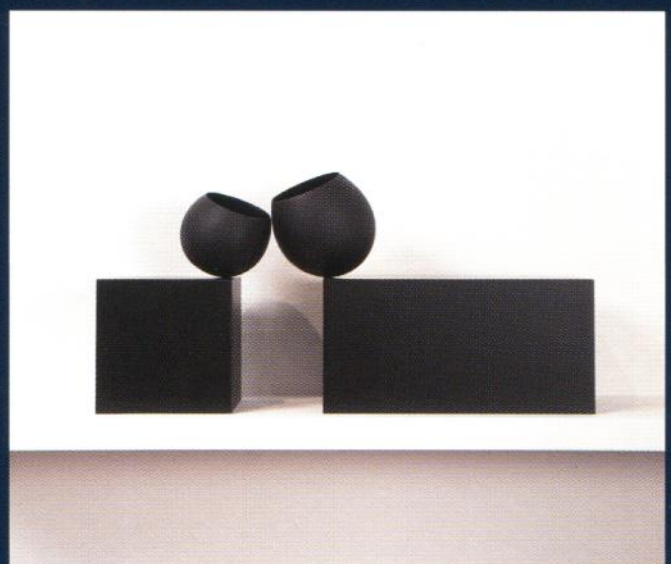
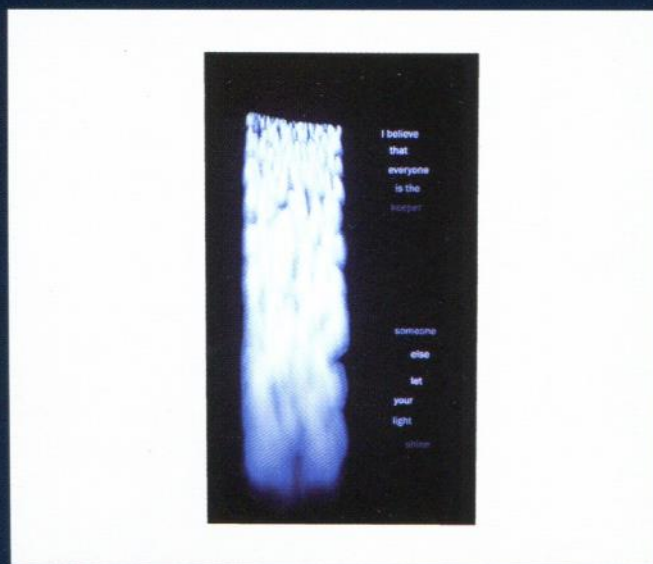
Anthony Johnson's *Stutter* sets up an intriguing dialogue between readymade and fabricated sculptural traditions. The performative act of destruction, and the meticulous recreation or mimicry of this gesture, activates enduring dialogues in art history: the abstract and the figurative, the original and its reproduction, the expressive and the representational.

Two objects which are apparently identical, are created with opposing method and intent. As a commentary upon the demise of modernity, Johnson's sculpture is an intriguingly crafted form of post-industrial origami. With an almost traumatic realism, *Stutter* balances intent and chance, planning and improvisation, to extend traditions of minimalist sculpture and performance, whilst also invoking dialogues between memory and the un-monumental.

We noted a lively, diverse and sophisticated range of art forms and practices, including refined modernist traditions, innovations in the realm of design, and excursions into post-analogue, digital media. While commending works by Chris Bond, Annika Koops, Grant Stevens and Belinda Winkler, we congratulate all participating artists and look forward to the public reception of the exhibition.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Chris Bond
Annika Koops
Grant Stevens
Belinda Winkler



HOBART'S CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

Rebecca Fitzgibbon

For the past 25 years, the City of Hobart Art Prize has proven itself not only a prize for Tasmanian artists active in our community, but for artists nationwide who are drawn to the state at this time in our City's cultural renaissance. From a modest beginning in 1988, the City of Hobart Art Prize has grown in scope and significance to the Tasmanian visual art, craft and design sector, to become a major survey exhibition of contemporary art from across Australia.

Having funded, managed and staged the exhibition for the past 25 years, the City of Hobart was initially prompted to establish the Prize by a desire to replace a photomontage of Hobart donated by the City to the Tasmanian Legislative Council years before. The Council advertised a prize to acquire a painting of Hobart in 1987, with a 'one-off' prize for its replacement. At that time, there were no significant Australian art prizes other than the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes, but that would soon change. With the involvement of Mrs Jill Freeman, former Lady Mayoress and Director of Freeman Galleries, the Council established an annual prize for a painting with Hobart as the subject, to be exhibited at the Freeman Galleries, before moving to the Town Hall and the Carnegie Gallery, and settling at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG). Over the years, the Prize has forged a long-standing and productive partnership with TMAG and with the Museum's recent refurbishment, this year's quarter-century anniversary of a nationally significant Prize for award-winning art in Hobart is something to be proud of.

From that portrait of Hobart to today, the scope of the Prize has changed along with our city. Traditionally open to two mediums per year free of curatorial theme, offering two acquisitive City of Hobart Art Prizes, and a People's Choice Award, this year the Prize has transformed: the medium was thrown open, with a single prize of \$30,000 to be awarded to the winner. For the first time, the 2013 Prize includes all collectible arts, craft and design forms, with an open-range nature that frees artists from exclusivity towards convergence, hybridity, collaboration and cross-media practice.

It's a new era for the Prize, and prizes remain important to practicing artists. From the Vogel to the Archibald, creative industry awards and prizes create an opportunity for arts practitioners to gain professional prestige in their specialty field, as well as offering a financial benefit, of particular benefit to emerging artists. Open to artists from around the nation, the City of Hobart Art Prize offers participants the opportunity to see where they are positioned in a context larger than their own. This is compelling for Tasmanian artists, who are so often bound by the tyranny of geography and resulting impracticality of touring works. Bringing the nation to Hobart, this acquisitive Prize offers artists the opportunity to contextualise themselves within a national framework without having to narrow the realm of creative possibility. It is an aspirational situation that challenges and stimulates.

This year's finalists create and document a snapshot of our cultural history, however the works are not only pertinent to Hobart; they also form a reflection of the wider Australian cultural climate in which Hobart occupies a growing presence and influence.

The continuing importance and relevance to our community of the City of Hobart Art Prize is highlighted by the City of Hobart's new Cultural Strategy – *Creative Hobart* (2013). *Creative Hobart* outlines a new approach for the City of Hobart in positioning the City as a platform to enhance a sense of place by activating public spaces and Council facilities such as the Town Hall, City Hall, Mawson Place, Waterside Pavilion, Mathers House and the Youth Arts and Recreation Centre. It proposes that the City become an incubator, nurturing creativity, investing in innovation and celebrating excellence and diversity – and it's not just an optimistic sentiment.

The Strategy is based on a holistic vision that contemporary cultural policy needs to build on the recognition that the growth of the cultural and creative industries provides a real opportunity to grow community wellbeing, create a culturally rich sense of place and contribute to economic viability. It seeks to contribute to the development of a vibrant and diverse city, support an expanded breadth of programs that bring more cultural and creative activities into the public realm, and provide an attractor for cultural tourism, making Hobart a richer place to live, work and visit. A city is only as stimulating as its stimulators, and so importantly, the Strategy emphasises the City as a connector of creative people, facilitating the gathering and disseminating of knowledge and brokering connections in the community.

With cultural events such as MONA FOMA, Dark Mofo, Ten Days on the Island, Tasmanian Writers' Festival, TasPride, Hobart Baroque, and Festival of Voices, Hobart is developing a new reputation as a festival destination. People talk of the 'Bilbao effect' that MONA has had on the state, but it is not restricted to Berriedale or to art circles. Giving credence to the cultural sphere, events, installations and instigations, can have a powerful impact on our broader community's sense of identity and locality. What we put in comes back tenfold, beyond the initial boundaries of contribution. Tasmania's niche arts contribute to the State's growing cultural tourism appeal, improve the City's national and international reputation as progressive and sophisticated, and comprise an integral part of the social and economic fabric. We can rightly feel optimistic that the City of Hobart is engaging with the visual art and creative sector with these factors in mind, across performing arts and music, writing, publishing and digital

media, film, TV and radio, advertising, public relations and marketing, design (including graphic, fashion, product, industrial, interior, jewellery and timber), architecture, digital media and software development.

'There is a sense of "anything goes" here,' Peter Timms wrote in the Prize catalogue back in 2005, 'which will be either delightfully liberating or worryingly anarchic, depending on your point of view.' Still timely. This year's Prize reflects the diversity of Australia's cultural consciousness, not only in the varied mediums and formats of the finalists' artworks, but also in their conceptual motivations. The ideas expressed here are vital and probing, offering a cultivated insight into the contemporary Australian cultural condition.

Themes explored by the City of Hobart Art Prize 2013 finalists encompass chance and balance, decay and failure (Anthony Johnson; Chris Bond). These are counterpointed by fantasy and darkness (Jane Burton; Michael Doolan), realism and surrealism (Christopher Day). There is a palpable tension between the organic and manufactured (Colin Langridge), transformation and discord (Philippe Vranjes), resilience and adaptation (Megan Walch). There are examinations of perception and representation (Laura Hindmarsh), belonging and placelessness (Rosalind Drummond).

These artists envision humanity in networked technologies and cultural politics (Annika Koops; Baden Pailthorpe); they are transmitting subliminal messages, interpreting and translating (Mish Meijers; Lisa Reid) and examine how people move in a space (Alan Young) and explore the spaces in between (Belinda Winkler). They broach reconciliation of land and body (Michael Needham); distancing from primitivism (Tom O'Hern and Lou Conboy); landscape, transformation, and the passing of time (Neil Haddon; Honor Freeman). They keep heritage alive through urban ritualism (Elliat Rich) and Indigenous tradition (Pantjiti Lionel; Timothy Cook; Derek Thompson and Ngunyijima Carroll, Sonia Kurarra); contemporary contemplation (Grant Stevens); and ceremonialising of mortality (Julia deVille).

They imagine future fauna and landscapes (Amanda Davies; Marilyn Fairskye), while evaluating consumerism's eco-impact and transient ecologies (Vipoo Srivilasa; Leigh Hobba). Across the creative spectrum, artists encounter deconstructivist conceptualism (Tricky Walsh) and relish pure aestheticism (Daniel To and Emma Aiston). All these facets of the individual and collective creative experience are included in this one riotously creative exhibition; the 25th annual City of Hobart Art Prize.

'Diversity, variety, confusion, anarchy – whatever you want to call it – should be seen not just as a loss of old values,' Timms continues, 'but as the fertile breeding ground of new ones, responsive to new influences yet mindful of what is really worth keeping from the past.' ■



Chris Bond VIC
Crimson 2012

oil on linen, canvas, card, mdf
24 x 16